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Bach's Passion Music.

[From the German of C. H. BITTER.]

THE ST. JOHN PASSION. (Continued).

... The musical recitation of the Gospel here, in its different persons, is very difficult. Almost more than in the Matthew-Passion the effect of the work as a whole rests on it; it stands more in the foreground. ... Without perfection of delivery, these Recitatives (of the Evangelist and of Christ), which often seem very much extended, lose their effect.

It is much to be regretted that we have no account of the way in which Bach's Passions were executed under the master's own direction, especially in the part of the Evangelist. Yet they required such singers as are not easily found at all times.

C. THE CHORUSES OF THE JEWS.

... We pass from the narrative portion to the choruses of Jews and priests belonging in connection with it. In these we find that dramatic, characteristic impetus, which with larger dimensions and with increased means distinguishes the Matthew choruses in so high a degree. But we also find the majority of these choruses, so far as they do not belong merely to the passing dramatic effect, the momentary situation, treated with a certain breadth, essentially different from the compressed energy of the corresponding choruses in the Matthew Passion.

The first part of the work contains only three choruses, two of which, short in themselves, are set to the same *motive*, which is repeated twice more in the second part. These are the sentences of the Jews, in which to Christ's repeated question: "Whom seek ye?" they reply: "Jesus of Nazareth!" This answer is set forth in rhythmical declamation and with great firmness, while the first violin, strengthened by the flute, moves in a lively figure over the voices and the orchestra. The catchpoles know and do not deny it, that they seek the Lord. But they are inwardly uneasy. For they are not filled with a sense of the justice of their commission. They bring the betrayer with them.

The other chorus of Jews in the first part: "Art thou not one of His disciples?", with its short, abrupt sentences, and the oft repeated *motive* traversing all the voice-parts, is a very peculiar creation. Bach felt obliged to perfectly exhaust his theme, which he has treated in the fugue style. The words: "Art thou not" are sung not less than 45 times; the curious, wavering and hasty character of the Jewish crowd is there distinctly represented. Perhaps Bach in the treatment of this sentence wished to lay the groundwork for the counter-effect which he was presently to bring out in the noble and profoundly serious treatment of the words of the Evangelist: "And wept bitterly."

In the second part we find, as we have said, the chorus of the first part: "Jesus of Nazareth" again in the two sentences: "Not this one, but

"Barabbas" and "We have no king but Cæsar." Moreover in the chorus: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," we find the upper parts of the orchestra (two flutes and violin in unison) treated in a manner that comes very near to those choruses. Nothing could be more unjust than to suppose that Bach sought in this way to save labor, or to eke out poverty of ideas. His inexhaustible wealth of thoughts and his own conscientiousness in all his works, great and small, insure him once for all against such a presumption, to which his Christmas Oratorio and his Latin Masses might seem still more open. Nor will it do to assume that he sought to bring the character of the popular masses palpably before the listening public through such outward means as we find now-a-days employed in the "Opera of the Future." Bach had no need of such. For the characterization that we find in his works is of a distinct internal sort, and not external. But he never wrought without a purpose, and it seems to us as if he meant, by just this repetition of the same *motive* in these short, abrupt dramatic sentences, to secure greater unity and firmness of impression to a work exciting such a multitude of alternating feelings.

We find a confirmation of this view in the frequent repetition of the same Choral melodies in different portions of the work. We find it also in the repetition of the *motive* in the other people's choruses of the second part. The choruses: "If He were not a malefactor," and "It is not lawful for us," are in *motive* the same. The chorus: "Hail, King of the Jews" repeats itself later in "Write not the King of the Jews." The chorus: "Crucify Him," appears anew, with change of key, in the chorus: "Away with Him!" ... Everywhere the inner connection of sentences similarly treated is unmistakable. At all events it is beyond doubt that the recurring *motives*, in the places where they meet us, are strikingly effective and take deep hold on us dramatically. The chorus: "If He were not a malefactor" is a masterpiece of characteristic treatment. The theme, first entering in the Bass, rising and falling chromatically, and carried freely on through all the parts, speaks to us in its hard, incisive tones like wild, bloodthirsty fanaticism. A diabolical passion speaks out of this web of tones. It increases in intensity at the words: "We would not have delivered Him up." While the howling rage of the people carries on the former theme, the other voices in a wild confusion lash each other to a tempest of excitement, to cry down the conscientious scruples of the governor Pilate, till finally they unite for a strongly marked close on the short and angry repetition, four times, of the word "not."

When the Governor answers them: "Take ye Him and judge Him according to your laws," the same sentence is repeated in abridged form, with a masterly change of thematic treatment. The second *motive* of the preceding chorus here and there is scarcely heard. The chromatic passages keep the upperhand, while the upper parts of

the orchestra assume the character of the short people's sentences. But as if a mortifying sense of their own impotence lay in the words: "It is not lawful for us to put any one to death,"—a suppressed spite against the foreign power that rules in the land,—this sentence moves a fourth lower than the preceding. It expresses a timid yet defiant obstinacy, while the inward roar and fermentation are transferred to the wild movement of the orchestra.

Now the popular fury has clutched its victim. The Lord is clothed with the scarlet mantle and the crown of thorns, and the soldiers mock the patient one. While flutes and oboes storm away in rapid passages, the mocking strain: "Hail, King of the Jews" sounds in a flattering melody that winds through all the voices. Coldly and sneeringly it moves under the polished orchestral figures that wind like snakes about it. So soon as the people and the high priests see the Lord exposed to this derision, so soon as "the voice of pity from the tyrant's throne" has vainly uttered its "Behold the man," the rage of the fanatical mob bursts forth with wildest madness. While from some you hear "Crucify, crucify" in short, quick rhythmic phrases, others cry out the same words with long protracted clamor.

In constant alternation of the meeting voices, and with more and more marvellous thematic treatment, is this self-out bidding chorus carried on, until its involutions in the last bars over the fixed high D of the bass seem like the veritable cross. It is a satanic fury that has seized the people. We shudder as if we felt the breath of Hell upon us from this wild whirl of harmonies.

And Pilate says to the excited multitude: "Take ye Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."

But that was not what the high priests and scribes desired. Not through themselves would they have Christ put to death. It must be done by the highest power in the land, that they may say a malefactor has been executed in the regular course of law. And so they come, law book in hand, before the governor. Firm and sure, with suppressed passion, they point out his duty: "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made himself the Son of God." In a fugued setting theme and countertheme are first taken up by the bass and carried through in the strictest style. The arrogant defiance of the Jewish priesthood, the reproachful assurance with which they meet the governor, are expressed in a masterly manner. Only toward the close the passion breaks forth anew in long-drawn tones of the upper voices, while the strongly outlined bass takes up the fugue again; and so the chorus ends with more and more importunate demand.

The governor, in his better feeling, considers how he may set Jesus free. But the sanctimonious mob of priests have other means in readiness. Falling back upon the character of unflinching loyalty to law, they argue that, if Pilate should release the man who has set himself up for King, he would be no true friend of Cæsar.

n the severe tone of the preceding chorus, and in similar fugued style, the scribes lay it before the governor that he must put Jesus to death. These two choruses, inwardly and outwardly belonging together, are masterworks of characterization. Bach employs the strictest counterpoint as the true means to his end. But it is not through the forms that he produces the effect. It is the melody of the themes treated, which, springing forth at one cast with the form, transports us, from the first moment of its entrance, into the midst of the situation. We see those Pharisees and hypocrites, rapping upon their written law, the other hand upon their breast, hiding their falsehood and their malice deeply in themselves, advance with firm step before the seat of judgment, and, backed by the tumultuous and goaded multitude, bring forward proofs for form's sake, which is all they care about. And the Jews outside scream out again: "Away with Him!" and, after a short, powerfully marked introduction, the "Crucify" of the preceding chorus resounds anew.

The demand of the popular voice is now fulfilled. The Lord is nailed upon the cross. The governor has affixed to it a scroll: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." But the priests, who understand their business, and who do not mean to let the wavering and terrified Pilate go out of their hands, require him to write that "He has said." He is the King of the Jews. Here we find again employed the earlier chorus sung in mockery of Christ: "Hail, King," &c.

... The soldiers divide the garments of Jesus. But for the seamless coat they draw lots: "Let us not rend it." An animated theme, whose syncopated passages convey the idea of rending asunder,—while the shaking of the lots in a helmet is depicted in an upward figure, and the words: "whose it shall be" are firmly marked,—is carried through in fugue style with brilliant treatment of all the parts. Here it is no longer fierce religious zeal, bloody bigotry, that speaks to us; we have to do with something quite objective. The roaring flood no longer thunders on unbridled. Wrath is satisfied; the victim falls. The simple course of the serious action with this chorus draws towards the end.

In all these choruses we find the firm, characteristic delineation, so peculiar to Bach, combined with lively dramatic effect. The form is a perfect one. The unity of conception is carried up to a rare pitch. We often hear it said that these choruses, especially the "Crucify," fall short of those in the Matthew Passion; this may be partly owing to one's individual conception, but partly also to the less effective treatment of the Gospel text as a libretto. Here are wanting just those effective antitheses, which there stand out in the ideal congregation. At all events, as we before have intimated, Bach from the standpoint of the St. John Passion has taken a step forward in the Passion according to St. Matthew.

(To be continued.)

Giulia Grisi.

(From the Orchestra.)

On Thursday died in Berlin Giulia Grisi, *la Diva*, the greatest artist of the operatic stage which modern times have brought forth. So much tenderness in the public breast clings to those who have done well in the cause of art, that the death of a great worker arouses a feeling of universal sorrow, howsoever removed from active life the artist may have been. Grisi in retirement was nothing to the nation but a

memory: she had finished her work, her old power was departed, she had essayed to retain her sway and had failed: in short she *had been*, no longer *was*. Still, she lived. She was one of us; could sympathize in the doings of the world, and was a link that bound us to "the brave days of old." When therefore on Monday the news reached this country of the irrevocable end of the Queen of Song—the retirement beyond recall—public regret took general expression. "Poor Grisi!" And then old opera-goers waxed garrulous of the great times when the one unrivalled quartet held the world in admiration—Rubini, Tamburini, Grisi, Lablache. Rubini and Lablache are dead, and now Grisi: Tamburini survives, an old man. To mention Grisi was to call up a splendid succession of triumphs ranging from 1834 to 1846—a period which is "history" for the younger generation. No wonder then that the news of her death smote all who recollect her in her prime as the severance of a link of association with the past.

Giulia Grisi was born at Milan in 1810; at her death therefore she was in her sixtieth year. Her father was an officer of engineers in the army of Napoleon I., and her aunt, the once celebrated singer Josephine Grassini. Educated in a convent, she was induced to leave that and take to the stage upon learning of the success of her elder sister Giudetta in the lyric profession. At first her capacities seemed wanting. Her health was delicate, her voice unformed and prone to hoarseness; but she was stubborn and enthusiastic, and succeeded in overcoming her parents' scruples. In the arguments which she urged for permission to become a singer, she was backed by her sister. "Giulia," said Giudetta, "will outshine us all." She made her debut in a contralto part—that of *Emma* in Rossini's "*Zelmira*"—in the town of Bologna. An account says that at this time her voice, though resonant and singularly pure, was low in register, having indeed but lately got clear of a hoarseness which had affected the organ during the years of childhood. The sisters sang together at Florence in Bellini's opera "*I Capuletti ed i Montecchi*"—the elder as *Romeo*, the younger as *Juliet*. Afterwards, at Milan, her birthplace, Giulia Grisi met and took as her model the great Pasta, to whose *Norma* she was the *Adalgisa*, both parts having been written by Bellini for the pair. Pasta, it is said, prophesied the young singer's splendid career, and with pardonable egotism named her as worthy to be her successor. "Tu sarai Pasta!" she exclaimed approvingly. Grisi herself sighed to play *Norma*, and expressed her longing to Bellini. "Wait twenty years," returned the composer. "I shall not wait ten," answered the *Adalgisa*. Her rise, which was in a large measure due to Rossini, who may be said to have made her, was precipitated by a quarrel with her manager, and the evasion of Giulia to France. At that time Rossini was part-director of the Salle Favart, and to him Mme. Grassini, her aunt, gave Giulia an introduction. Her debut in Paris took place in 1832; the part was *Semiramide*. That year her sister Giudetta was singing in London at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket—her last year of her public life; though she lived eight years longer before premature death cut short a promising career. In 1832 Giulia came out as *Anna Bolena* to Tamburini's *King Henry*; two years later she was engaged for London. It was as *Ninetta* in "*La Gazza Ladra*," the cast including Rubini, Zucchi, Tamburini, and Miss Bartolozzi, afterwards Mme. Vestris, that Giulia Grisi first appeared before a London audience, this great musical event occurring on Tuesday, the 8th of April, 1834. She instantly took firm hold of the affections of her English hearers; and for seven and twenty years she retained it. Every part which she assumed after her first appearance steadily increased her reputation, which may be said to have been established by her impersonation of the Queen in "*Semiramide*," and of *Donna Anna* in "*Don Giovanni*." From her first appearance in this country till 1861, with one exception, namely in 1842, Mme. Grisi did not miss a single operatic season. Her first season in London already gave earnest of the triumphs to come. She was the *Desdemona* to Mlle. Poissi's *Otello*; and she played *Donna Anna* in "*Don Giovanni*," when Mme. Caradori was the *Zelina*. All these achievements of unqualified success were in the first month of her engagement; and in May she increased the list by her performance of *Elvira* in "*La Donna del Lago*," and *Rosina* in "*Il Barbiere*." Two more Rossinian triumphs followed in June, when she appeared first as *Semiramide*, and then as *Palmira* in "*L'Assedio di Corinto*," an opera which was then quite new in England. She concluded her brilliant first season at the Haymarket Opera House with the performance, on her benefit night, July 10th, of *Amina* in "*La Sonnambula*." From *Norma* to *Amina*; from *Donna Anna* to *Ninetta*; what artist ever filled so ample a range?

The great part of *Norma* she made her own in

1835. Her career now became a succession of new triumphs, the order of which is given in a contemporary record of her public life. In 1836 she added only one new part to her repertory, that, namely, of *Amelia* in Mercadante's opera, "*I Briganti*," played for the first time in England. The season of 1837 was rendered specially memorable by the death of William the Fourth, and the consequent closing of "the King's Theatre," on the evening of Tuesday, the 20th of June. The house reopened under its new name, "Her Majesty's Theatre;" and Queen Victoria made her first visit as the Sovereign, on the 18th of July, when the "*Ildegonda*" of Marliana was produced, Mme. Grisi representing the heroine. Signor Costa's opera, "*Malek Adel*," was first played in this season, Mme. Grisi being the *Mathilde*, and the cast including also the *debutante* Mme. Albertazzi, Ivanoff, Rubini, Tamburini, and Lablache. In this same year of 1837, Mme. Grisi added likewise to her list of triumphs the performance of *Carolina* in Cimarosa's "*Matrimonio Segreto*." Her new characters in 1838 were *Parisina*, in Donizetti's opera of that name; *Susanna*, in Mozart's "*Nozze di Figaro*;" and *Mrs. Ford* in Balfe's "*Falstaff*." In the course of that season Mme. Persiani first appeared in England. The following year gave Mme. Grisi only one new part, but it was one that has done more to enhance her reputation than almost any other. On the occasion of her benefit, on the 6th of June, 1839, Donizetti's opera of "*Lucresia Borgia*" was played for the first time in England, Mme. Grisi, of course, being the *Lucresia*, and Signor Mario making his first appearance before an English audience as *Gennaro*. Among the other events of the season may be noted the debut in this country of Mme. Viardot, as *Desdemona*; and the first appearance of Mlle. Ernesta Grisi, who played the contralto part of *Sineon* to the *Anna Bolena* of her cousin. In the season of 1840 the great prima donna played for the first time *Lisetta* in "*Il Matrimonio Segreto*," and *Eloisa*, on the production of Mercadante's "*Il Giuramento*." In 1841 Mme. Grisi undertook two new characters in operas, both played for the first time in England, and both by Donizetti—*Fausta* and *Roberto Devereux*. During the whole of the next season Mme. Grisi did not appear. The year 1843 is noticeable in operatic annals for the production of "*Don Pasquale*," which sprightly quartet was composed by Donizetti for Grisi, Mario, Fornasari, and Lablache, and which, with the substitution of Tamburini for Fornasari, continued to amuse and delight audiences for long after. Towards the close of the season Mme. Grisi appeared as the heroine of the "*Cenerentola*." In 1844 her new roles were *Isabella* in Signor Costa's "*Don Carlos*" and *Delizia* in Ricci's "*Corada d'Altamura*," both operas being new. Her only part in 1845 was *Imogene* in Bellini's "*Il Pirata*;" in 1846, *Griselda* in Verdi's "*I Lombardi*." Mme. Grisi's connection with Italian Opera at Her Majesty's Theatre was then finally closed; and in 1847 she became a principal support of the Royal Italian Opera at the New Covent-garden Theatre, Mlle. Albani making her debut at the new house, and thus strengthening the opposition to her Majesty's Theatre, which seemed to take a new lease of hope in the Jenny Lind *fiore*. Mme. Grisi's only new part in 1847 was *Lucresia*, in Verdi's "*I Due Foscari*." In 1848 she played, for the first time, *Leonora*, in Donizetti's "*Favorita*." Meyerbeer's splendid work, "*Les Huguenots*," was produced for the first time on the occasion of the Queen's State visit in 1848, Mme. Viardot being the *Valentine*. In the following year Mme. Grisi assumed the part, and in 1850 she appeared for the first time as *Alice*, in the same composer's "*Robert le Diable*." In 1851 her new character was *Pamina*, in "*Il Flauto Magico*."

Her assumption of *Fides* ("*Le Prophète*") in the place of Graziani, over the possession of whom the two managers were waging desperate law, may be said to have crowned the edifice of her fame. This was in the London season of 1852. Two years later she bade farewell to the stage.* Her reputation would have been unimpaired had she kept to that intention; but unluckily she returned to say farewell over and over again. Fifty-six saw her singing; fifty-eight, fifty-nine, sixty came; in sixty one she was still saying farewell. The affection of the English public for an old favorite is generous and tolerant; but in 1861 it was apparent even to the most indulgent of her admirers that Grisi ought to have retired. At last, when she made yet another effort in 1866 to resume her sway, public patience gave way, and the great Grisi was absolutely hissed! The lesson must have been a humiliating one: at all events she took it to heart. She finally passed from public life.

The secret of the marvellous hold which Grisi pos-

* Her visit to America, with Mario, in 1854, is strangely ignored by this biographer.—Ed.

essed on the hearts of her auditory is analyzed and solved by a contemporary with judicious accuracy. "It was a combination," says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "of personal and physical gifts that no other artist ever possessed in an equal degree. Pasta was more sublime at moments, Persiani was more ineffectual(?) and refined in her vocalization, Malibran was more startling in her impulses. Viardot more intensely dramatic, Jenny Lind more sensational with her four high notes, Cornélie Falcon more touching, Sontag more brilliant; but for the presentation of a part in its entirety, for the embodiment of powerful emotion, combined with beauty of person, richness and roundness of voice, with the power of exercising a potent spell over a vast auditory, Grisi has never been surpassed. Her scales have been excelled, her intervals have been distanced, her shakes have been articulated more wondrously by other vocalists; but after citing isolated instances of superior attributes in this or that feature, or exactness of execution, still with a vivid recollection of singers of every country for nearly half a century, we can recall no instance of a prima donna like Grisi for the general purposes of a lyric theatre." Her capacity for hard work was supreme. She scarcely ever required an excuse for non-appearance. Her carelessness as to that magnificent organ of hers was equally exalted. While other prima donnas anxiously lay up their throats in quarantine for the night's performance, and with wraps and warmth and repose await the eight o'clock campaign, Grisi used to trot about her garden in sharp weather, her neck exposed, or move about her household affairs with a sublime contempt for draughts. Exposure did not affect her voice; and yet it was her singular fate to die of inflammation of the lungs. She had been ill throughout her stay in Berlin, being there arrested by the disease on her way to join her husband Mario in St. Petersburg. Mario was her second husband, the first being M. de Meley—an unhappy match which resulted in a legal separation and separate maintenance: the wife, curiously enough, being called upon to support the husband. Accordingly M. de Meley received a yearly income paid him by his wife. As the separation was effected by a French Court, and as it is not competent for a French Court to pronounce a complete divorce, Grisi's subsequent marriage with Mario was not by French law recognized as a legal proceeding. Five children are the issue of the latter union.

When, three weeks since, Mme. Grisi left the Villa Salviata, her residence in Florence, she had a small carbuncle on her face. During the journey it rapidly developed, producing considerable enlargement of the glands of the throat, and she was obliged to remain at Berlin. The tumor being freely opened, Mme. Grisi became better, and sat up. A few days before her death she was seized with symptoms of apoplexy, and Dr. Warren Isbell, of Plymouth, in whom for many years Mme. Grisi had placed great confidence as a medical man, was telegraphed for: but she died on Thursday before that gentleman's arrival. Mme. Grisi's daughters were with her at the time of her death. Signor Mario arrived at Berlin on Sunday.

The Peabody Institute of Baltimore.

BALTIMORE, November 25, 1869.

To the Editor of the Boston Journal:

Among the many objects of interest in this city most prominent is the Peabody Institute. Its character is in many respects unique, and its operations are worthy of attentive study. The original letter of Mr. Peabody, written in 1857, sets forth the plan with singular clearness; and whether it is considered as the fruit of a long life of observation, the expression of a large-minded and generous man, or as a scheme of intellectual and aesthetic culture, the letter is equally remarkable. In its wise and liberal views, its proper estimate of the value of the arts in refining character and in making life beautiful, as well as in the humanity that animates the whole composition, it will remain an enduring memorial of the founder. I must confess that even the princely benefactions of Mr. Peabody have not impressed me so deeply as has the perusal of this noble letter.

Believing that we have yet much to learn, and still more to do in Boston in similar fields, I will give a brief sketch of the Institute and of its operations.

The plan includes, first, a library; secondly, lectures upon science and literature; thirdly, an academy of music; fourthly, a gallery of the fine arts. Provision is also made for the distribution of medals and prizes to meritorious pupils of both sexes in the public schools; the only part of the scheme to which there can be any objection. The benefit of these incentives to study I strongly question, believing that in the wiser time to come pupils will be led into the pleasant fields of learning without the stimulus of prizes which gratify the fortunate winner at the cost

of so many heartaches in the breasts of his fellows. The amount of the fund is one million dollars; the accrued interest is nearly \$200,000 more. The trustees are twenty-five in number, of whom the venerable John P. Kennedy is President. A beautiful building of white marble (costing \$170,000 besides the land) has been erected on the corner of Charles street and Mount Vernon square, facing the magnificent monument to Washington. The building, however, is not adequate for the purposes intended, and two adjoining estates have been purchased, over which, next year, the edifice will be extended. On the ground floor is the hall used for lectures and concerts, capable of seating from 1200 to 1500 persons. It is a pleasant room, brilliantly lighted, and with good acoustic qualities. Above is the library, with convenient rooms for reading and for the librarian's use. I believe it is intended hereafter to transfer the library into the new building; a desirable change, since the present hall is imperfectly lighted, and will not contain as many books as are necessary for a reasonably complete collection. The librarian, Mr. Uhler, appears to be an admirable officer, full of enthusiasm, and well versed not merely in bibliography but in many departments of science. The collection may be considered in a formative state, many departments being yet incomplete. It numbers about 37,000 volumes, but it is to be observed that on account of the large size of the works thus far purchased, it occupies as much space as is generally allotted to 50,000. It has the recently published English State papers, a large number of French histories and memoirs, a particularly full collection of works on the natural sciences, the great work of Lepsius on Egypt, full illustrations of Pompeian and other antiquities, and a pretty complete collection of the materials for American History.

In one view of the case it is to be regretted that no department has been established for loaning books. The only provision for this public want in this large city is made by the Mercantile Library, an institution of rather moderate aims and capabilities. There is no Loring nor Burnham in the whole city. What all these bright-eyed and daintily-stepping damsels do here without an institution like Loring's I cannot conceive. Imagine the despair of young Boston in such a plight! But Mr. Peabody expressly desired that no part of the fund should go to the support of a circulating library, because he expected that that obvious want would be provided for in due time by the city, or by the citizens themselves. He aimed to furnish the means of diffusing a higher culture, which the more popular libraries wholly lack. I was very happy to see a good number of readers in the rooms, and to learn that the interest of scholars in the library is on the increase.

The idea of establishing an Academy of Music was a very happy one. In Mr. Peabody's view this was not so much to provide a cheap amusement for the public, as "to diffuse and cultivate a taste for music, the most refining of all the arts." The Provost of the Institute, Mr. Morrison, in his last annual report, says: "No portion of the money spent attracts so large a share of the public attention and sympathy as this. Here the Institute is brought more widely into contact with the public, and the beneficence of its founder is more generally felt than in any other of its present operations."

The Academy provides musical instruction at very moderate rates, and gives orchestral concerts every fortnight. The Director is Mr. Southard, whose musical learning and great natural powers are well known in Boston. Here he has a field for his ambition. An orchestra numbering over fifty is employed by the government, and rehearses twice a week under the Director. I have sometimes fancied that the chief pleasure a prince enjoys is in having his band play for him after dinner. But if one could not be a prince, the next thing (musically) would be to be the conductor of the orchestra. The youth when he holds the reins of his mettlesome horse, the yachtman with his hand on the tiller, while aloft the white sails belly out and the taper spars bend like willow wands—each has his own delight; but the leader whose baton the wild forces of music obey, he is as truly *anax andron*, king of men, as the leader on a battle field. In the culmination of some grand overture it might seem as if one were driving a team of lions. Fortunate for the conductor when he happens also to be a composer. How many an ambitious author would give the tip of his ear to have his thoughts breathed out by melodious brass and twanged by obedient catgut! In none of the arts is there such difficulty in getting "a hearing," and we shall never know what immortal strains have floated away into the infinite, unsung. From Mr. Southard's creative ability and skill in instrumentation we may now expect substantial results. One of his works, a descriptive overture, entitled "Night in the Forest," has been several times played here and universally ad-

mired. He has had many obstacles to contend with, not the least of which being that he had the misfortune to come from Boston. But the success of the Academy is an established fact, and the steady improvement of the orchestra under his able leadership cannot be gainsaid.

It would gratify your musical readers much if they could hear the performances of a wonderfully precocious pianist, Miss Kate Cecilia Gaul, a pupil of Mr. Courlaender, one of the Professors of the Institute. At the last concert she played Beethoven's concerto in E flat, (op. 73), with orchestral accompaniment, and with a clearness and brilliancy that was astonishing. This little lady is thirteen years of age, but although her features are sweet, modest and childlike, her playing shows that she has a rare maturity of mind and feeling. That she is to be one of the most brilliant stars there can be no doubt. The instrument, a splendid Chickering grand, was presented by the makers to the Institute.

The programmes of the Peabody concerts (as they are commonly called) are much like those of our Harvard Association, but shorter and a trifle more popular, as is prudent and necessary. The audiences are not large, not over eight hundred usually, although the price is only fifty cents—a fact not very creditable to the musical taste of this city. I may observe here, in passing, that Mr. Peabody has not aimed to make any of his benefits wholly gratuitous, since people do not value that which costs absolutely nothing. For the lectures even a nominal fee is charged—\$1.50 for the course of thirty-two.

As a specimen of the wide range of subjects upon which the lectures are given I give the plan for the present season:

Prof. Mayer, two lectures on the Solar Eclipse; Prof. Morton, four, on Light.

Dr. Van Bibber, two, on the Influence of Light, Heat and Ventilation on Health.

Prof. G. W. Greene, four on the American Revolution; Dr. Carpenter, two, on Oysters and other Edible Mollusks.

Dr. B. A. Gould, four, on the Constitution of the Sun.

Prof. Ware, four on Architecture.

Prof. Lowell, four, on Chaucer and Pope, and other literary topics.

Prof. Smith, four, on the Forces of Matter.

President Coppee, two, on Ethnology.

These subjects, it will be observed, are all of present interest, and are among those which are engaging the attention of scholars and savans.

Upon the fifth course I should be pleased to deliver (privately) a lecture to the editor on my return, without charge. It will be a heartfelt production.

As to the last branch of the Institute, the projected gallery of fine arts, nothing has yet been done. Indeed, I do not see how it will be practicable to create a gallery that will be a credit to the Institute without an increase of its funds, or without greatly impairing the efficiency of the other departments. Perhaps some opulent citizen, emulous of the philanthropist's fame will make the necessary gift. There are some private collections of pictures here of great value, and which would make an admirable nucleus for the future gallery.

When the founder's intention is fully carried out, how noble it will appear! As if our Athenaeum, Lowell Institute, and Harvard Musical Association, were united under one comprehensive board of directors, and working with harmony for the instruction of our people in all useful learning and all refining arts! If Mr. Peabody had sought only to achieve the *monumentum aere perennius*, could he have done better? Therefore I most heartily agree with the Rev. Mr. Ware of this city, touching the erection of a memorial statue here, namely, that Mr. Peabody's monument is the Institute, and that if gentlemen wish to honor the founder, let them follow his example and give greater power to existing institutions or establish new ones.

UPSILON.

The Intelligent Understanding of Music.

From the Choir (London).

The majority of the music performed in our concert-rooms and not unfrequently in the home circle, might, we fear, be aptly described as "that which all hear but few understand." When we say this we are far from saying that it falls on an inattentive or unappreciative audience, but we simply assert what must be patent to all who exercise the most ordinary powers of observation, that an intelligent understanding of the great mass of the symphonies, sonatas, or even of the minor pieces we so constantly hear, is the exception and not the rule. That this should be the case is not surprising. Although musical educa-

tion, so-called, forms a part of the normal scheme at our ladies' schools; although choral societies and church choirs are at work all over the kingdom; although concerts form the most popular entertainments, even in the village school,—still these all tend chiefly to familiarize those who assist at them with musical sounds, and fail to impart any substantial aid towards the mental effort which must be made before those same sounds can be connected in the hearer's mind with anything more than a mere pleasurable sensation, which it is one, but one only of their true ends to produce. In the case of other sciences some attempt is usually made by the professor to impart instruction as well as amusement in the exercise of his art. The Owens and the Tyndalls of our day do not content themselves with demonstrations and experiments calculated only to attract and astonish the eye or ear. The lecturer on Chemistry does not consider his work is done when he has produced brilliant combinations of color. The electrician is not satisfied with mystifying a crowd of eager listeners with effects, of which the causes are beyond their ken. Rather, in all these cases, the popular exposition of the science is made the medium of conveying an explanation of its deep principles, which would not only be unintelligible but unpalatable to the ordinary and too often uneducated mind if placed nakedly before it. But when music is the subject treated, a totally opposite course is adopted. As a rule it is left to speak for itself. Symphony follows overture and song follows sonata night after night, season after season, and it is not too much to say that a very large number of the audience rise from their seats without even realizing the meaning of the varied forms in which the compositions are cast, much less the intention of the writers or the extent to which they have carried them out. The analytical programmes provided by the director of the Monday Popular Concerts for the use of his friends, and which the old and new Philharmonic and other societies have been stimulated to supply are, it is true, steps in the right direction, but even these are couched in language which is unhappily still a dead letter to the great body of amateurs, and thus they scarcely meet the want to which we are alluding. That it is a want of the age, is we think undeniable, and therefore it is worthy of consideration, whether, with the means already at our command, we cannot do something towards supplying it.

To this question a practical answer has been afforded during the past few weeks by the Musical Professor at Edinburgh University, whose efforts to promote the education of the amateurs of the art in the northern capital are forming so worthy a fulfilment of the objects which the founder of the Chair of Music had in view. Professor Oakeley has, as our readers have learnt from the frequent records we have published of his performances, given during the University sessions a series of organ recitals to which he has invited the citizens as well as the students, thus making the class-room in Park Place just what it should be—a centre of musical life for the whole city, as the University itself is a centre in every branch of learning for the country. In the programmes he has never failed to give an educational bearing to the recitals, and in selection and arrangement his schemes have hitherto been highly satisfactory; but to these advantages he has now added another at the opening of the present season by prefacing each piece with a few remarks either historical or descriptive, thus furnishing that very aid to an intelligent understanding of the music to the general absence of which we have alluded. Thus what in ordinary cases would be a mere organ concert has become a means of direct musical training, calculated not only to create a desire to search further into the deep things of the art, but to impart a totally fresh interest to the music played. Here then, in a rough form, is the remedy for the evil to which we have called attention, a means ready to hand of raising music from the unworthy place to which it has been too habitually lowered, and of imparting to our Concert rooms a higher element than is usually to be found in them. On

many occasions perhaps a running commentary on a performance would be out of place, but at such recitals as those of Miss Arabella Goddard and Mr. Charles Hallé, which are ostensibly designed to elevate the taste and to afford an intellectual entertainment to those who are anxious to be taught, we believe the system would be found to work most admirably. Indeed we question whether it might not with equal fitness be applied to all classical performances; and whether with a capable speaker, the introductory remarks would not soon be regarded as an integral part of the evening's entertainment. The days have, we would fain hope, forever passed away when music was regarded merely as the pastime of an idle hour, and we believe that some such assistance to intelligent progress would be gladly welcomed. It is impossible to watch an audience at a Monday Popular Concert without feeling that the brain as well as the mere sentimental enthusiasm of a large body of the almost breathless listeners is being called into exercise; and we are therefore ascribing to them nothing more than they deserve when we assert that they would rejoice still higher in the world of art opened out before them by the touch of a Goddard, or the bow of a Joachim.

At any rate, whether the adoption of such a system in ordinary concerts would be wise or not, of one thing there can be little doubt, that the provision of a series of concerts in which the explanatory remarks would form a component part of the scheme is highly desirable. If the music room at Edinburgh is crowded, it cannot be doubted that an equally eager band of amateurs would be found in London and in other large towns in the kingdom; and it would indeed be casting a slur upon the profession to argue that its foremost members are unable thus to set forth in intelligible language the meaning of the tone-poems to which their artistic skill imparts life and reality. Nay more, if in every district some such course were adopted, and if instead of the chief interest of a concert being centred on the special excellencies of the "star," the beauties of the music and the design of its composer were set forth with clearness and brevity, we can but think that the interests of art would be promoted, and that a powerful means would be provided of making the English in reality as well as in name a musical people.

Professor Oakeley on Mediæval Music.

On the afternoon of Thursday the 2nd inst., Professor H. S. Oakeley delivered the first of a series of open lectures in the Park Place Music Hall, Edinburgh. In addition to many students, a number of other gentlemen were present.

Professor Oakeley, in his introductory remarks, adverted to the necessity of public lectures to mixed audiences on musical subjects being free from technicalities in order that they might be generally interesting, and stated that the legitimate work of a professor in such lectures was not so much to teach as to prepare for teaching, to remove discouragements, to awaken interest, and to form a sound and healthy taste on the subject which lay before him. In a former course of lectures on "Hebrew, Greek, and Roman Music, in connection with the national character," he endeavored to give some idea of music as it was among the greatest nations of the world before the Christian era. Resuming the subject where they left it, he again asked them to remark, as they could hardly, he thought, fail to do, how invariably music, like the other arts, but perhaps more than any other, proved itself the outward symbol of the inner spirit, the exponent of the hidden principle—in a word, the voice by which the heart of the people strove to express its wants, and poured forth its sweet sympathies.

Following the course of history in their glance at the progress of music, they started to-day from the Christian era—extending from that epoch to the Reformation, which he had chosen as his other boundary-line, because it seemed to correspond very closely with an era of remarkable significance in the progress of music. He would not have them imagine that they were entering now

on a very dreary, unromantic, or barren district of inquiry, or that there was little or nothing to repay them for the labor of their researches. It was true that the "dark ages," as they were sometimes called, had a very bad name for ignorance and barbarism; but while in some respects the charge was not altogether unfounded, there was some truth in the remark that the mediæval ages had been called dark partly and chiefly because of our own ignorance about them. Here and there in every century were sacred and sequestered spots, a retreat from the violence of brute force for minds with a taste for cultivation; and music, as they knew, and as he had observed in previous lectures, was indeed a thing of so universal a capacity that no age, no country, seemed to be able to exist entirely without it. Music was, indeed, a plant which struck its roots so deep into the heart, that no storms, no wintry blasts, could check its growth effectually, nor could ignorance or barbarism entirely prevent its small voice from being heard.

There were three points in regard to mediæval music generally, to which he wished to direct attention. In the first place, the music of mediæval Christendom was, after all, in a great measure, a reproduction and an outgrowth of Pagan Greece. As a modern writer truly said, "Music was, of course, employed from the earliest ages of the Christian Church in its religious services. What the music of the first Christians was can only be matter of conjecture, but it may be supposed to have been similar to that which had formerly been used in the different countries where they dwelt. In Judea, the religious chants formerly used in the Jewish worship would still be used; and in other parts of the Roman Empire the new Christians would have recourse to the Pagan hymns of the Greeks and Romans." As he had shown in a previous lecture, Rome, under the Emperors, content to borrow rather than to originate, did little more for the art than merely to copy Athens; and as Rome, with its irresistible eagles, tacitly succumbed to the superior influence of Grecian cultivation, so the rude Northmen could not but bow their heads, abashed and humbled, before the artistic supremacy of the nation which they had beaten on the battle-field. The Professor entered at some length into the grounds for attributing to the Church tones now designated "Gregorian chants" a Pagan origin, and then went on to state that the second point to which he begged to call attention, as a characteristic of music before the Reformation, was obviously connected with the preceding one—namely, that mediæval music, especially in its infancy, was strongly—he did not say exclusively—tinged with a clerical or ecclesiastical flavor. This, he said, could hardly be otherwise in a day when the clergy, or at least the monastic orders, were almost the sole pioneers of civilization and the sole representatives of art. They were, in fact, as a rule, the painters, the architects, the musicians of their period. While all ranks of society around them, from the baron in his feudal tower, and the burgess within the city ramparts, to the serf who tilled the soil, were occupied in almost unceasing strife, the clergy or monks alone had the time, the taste, or the facilities for uninterrupted study.

In referring to the monastic influence on music of mediæval times, which thus naturally gave to it a certain grave and ecclesiastical character, he did not forget that a less artistic kind of secular music existed from an early date, which was wholly independent of the more cultivated style to which he had been calling attention, and they must not ignore the existence of such melody as was made in early times, for instance by the "minstrels" or "scalds," the successors, perhaps, of the ancient bards, who were known and revered in all parts of Europe, and the precursors of "gleemen" or "harpers," and of the order of the English minstrels who flourished till the sixteenth century. Besides these were the troubadours, the jongleurs, and others, who seem to have sprung up in the tenth century in sunny Provence, and were now represented in Italy by "improvisatori," although, as he need scarcely say, far less romance and more knavery were as-

sociated with the modern trovatore than the mediæval troubadour.

The third important feature in mediæval music, and it was that which stamped it as thoroughly and essentially distinct from the music which preceded it, was the introduction of harmony. He spoke of harmony in a technical and scientific sense, and not merely as an accompaniment in musical concord to melody. After showing how the facts were accounted for, that melody was of southern birth, and that harmony was the more stately offspring of the north. Professor Oakeley stated that, in this third feature in mediæval music they had at least the introduction of a novel element, and one the importance of which could not be over-estimated, into the music of the dark ages; and they must not forget that the important invention of harmony and counterpoint was, to a great extent, to be attributed to the invention of the organ—an instrument the use of which, rude as it was then in its construction, became pretty general in Germany, Italy, and England during the tenth century. In concluding, the Professor said that in future lectures he hoped to carry forward their investigations into the historical idiosyncrasies of some of the principal nations of mediæval Europe, and he asked his audience to bear in mind the general propositions he had striven to lay before them:—First, that mediæval music comes to us ultimately from the pre-Christian era; next, that it was mainly, in its earlier stages, of a religious kind; and lastly—but for us it was the most important point of all—that, by its deep and more recondite harmony, it challenged for itself an independence of its own, and claimed to be indeed no mere tradition of an alien and effete race, but the true and living patrimony of the great northern family to which we ourselves boast to belong. He then made an announcement to the students to the effect that he would play on the organ in the hall on Thursday next at half-past four.

The Professor, who was frequently applauded, performed on the grand organ in the course of his lecture, an old "dance tune," in illustration of his remarks on mediæval secular music.—*Choir.*

Mr. Ritter's Third Lecture.

Mr. F. L. Ritter, in his third lecture (on the opera, from 1600 to the death of Gluck in 1787), traces the rise of Monods (?), properly so-called, from the acquirement of greater freedom among the various European nations, and an increasing need of the study of the secular sciences and arts. Touching on the mystery, or miracle plays, he spoke of the literary and scientific circles, among whom, principally in Italy, a desire arose for the revival of the Greek drama, with its music, of the wonderful effects of which so much had been written; and also of the efforts of many scientific Italians to discover and resuscitate the lost Greek musical poems. The attempts of Mei, Stros-i, Galilei (father of the astronomer, and others), were described, not forgetting the scenes, etc., by Galilei, "which seem to have been the first compositions for one voice, independent of counterpoint." The first, however, who wrote songs combined in a dramatic form was "Emilio del Cavaliere." He set to music two pastorals, "Il Satio" and "La Disperazione di Fileno," by the renowned poetess, Laura Guidicioni, and these were sung throughout. It seems, however, that Cavaliere's efforts were not entirely satisfactory. Peri was more successful. "He first made use of the stilo parlante; or recitative (before A. D. 1600), and every one among the modern Hellenes who heard his intermezzi, interspersed with choruses by the celebrated Madrigal composer, Luca Marenzio, believed that the musical forms which the old Greeks had used in their dreams were now recovered." Mr. Ritter then gave an interesting account of the dramas of Cavaliere and Peri, the kind of orchestra which they used, and a sketch of these composers' careers; "all the material for formation and construction of the opera was thus discovered, and in the course of time an art form emerged from these efforts, destined to play a conspicuous part in the artistic and social life of whole nations." The newly discovered recitative style made a great sensation all over Italy, and was carried to fuller perfection by Monteverde (born 1568), whose works, Mr. Ritter assures us, "show a great progress beyond those of his predecessors. Everywhere I find a tendency to give to the words and characters of his poem the true expression, gained by an effective use of harmonic and rhythmical means."

The opera, further aided by costume and machinery, having become a favorite entertainment at the different Italian courts, many composers essayed their powers in this form, among them the celebrated Alessandro Scarlatti, "to whom belongs the merit of having founded the Neapolitan school of music, out of which came forth a large array of distinguished composers and singers, whose influence has been felt up to our own day, and who perfected the recitative." Mr. Ritter then describes the transportation of opera to various European courts, where Lambert, Tully and Rameau gained, in France, the greatest success by writing in the Italian style, during the latter part of the seventeenth century.

In alluding to the progress of the English musical drama, Mr. Ritter paid a tribute to the genius of Henry Purcell, and after describing the state of the London musical stage, gave an account of Handel's career as an operatic composer and manager. Of Handel's operas he said that, "with the exception of a few exquisite airs and choruses, they have sunk into oblivion; and in spite of the great musical beauties they contain, the rich source of pure enjoyment and instruction they present to the student, to revive them on the stage would prove a decided failure."

The second part of this lecture presented a thorough review of the life and labors of the writer Gluck, and his reform of musical-dramatic art, with interesting accounts of his relations with his literary and noble contemporaries, and of the famous Gluck and Piccini feud. In a summary of what had been so far accomplished on the various operatic stages of Europe, Mr. Ritter said: "The opera, as the highest meaning and expression of the musical drama, is not the work of one nation. Italian art, as such, has only exclusive importance and signification for the Italian; French art for the Frenchman; German for the German; the quintessence of that great spirit which governs and inspires them all in their art productions, is the goal towards which the genius of mankind strives. Every one is called to bring a certain part of the universal work to its perfection. And then the appearance of the German element on the theatre of European culture was an event in the intellectual life of nations. Only then was it possible to lay a foundation for the future growth of music, considered as an art in our wide modern sense; yet, in a balmy climate, under the beautiful Italian sky, its first fruits ripened. But the Italian element was not intense and profound enough to give universality to musical art; the German element produced two apostles of mighty genius, Handel and Gluck, who were destined to proclaim the highest truths of music. As if providentially, London and Paris, the capitals of two great nations, and both foreign to these German masters, were selected as the battle fields where the egotistical art principle of one nation came into deadly conflict with the breadth and profundity of another." Mr. Ritter then explained the causes that have led to the supremacy of German art in our present state of musical culture.

FOURTH LECTURE.

In his lecture on the Oratorio, given last Tuesday evening, Mr. Ritter traced the origin of that musical form from the old miracle plays, and gave a long, detailed account of them, relating many interesting incidents connected with their authors and performers, as also the reason why the term oratorio has been applied to the modern sacred dramatic form. Cavaliere's rules for the performance of one of the first oratorios are curious, as is also the fact that the sacred music was enlivened by dancing in his time. The efforts of this composer, as well as of Animuccia, the friend of St. Philip Neri; of Carissimi, Stradella, Scarlatti and others, were described, and the infancy and development of that form known as the "Passion Oratorio," the first specimen of which, by a Protestant composer, was written three hundred years ago, though such Passions were enacted in Catholic churches long before. We then had an account of the works of Schuetz, who wrote, Mr. Ritter says, "great and powerful choruses, in which the Handelian spirit already breathes, though Handel was not yet born when Schuetz died." Sebastiani and Keiser were also alluded to. In following the progress of oratorio to its present modern perfection, Mr. Ritter gave much interesting information in regard to Luther's labors as a musician in the service of the reformed church, and also of the composers who were associated with him. It is not so well known as it should be that Luther ranked the profession of music as next below that of divinity. He attached the greatest importance to music as a moral agent in education, "as it renders the mind intellectual," and declared that he could never respect a schoolmaster who did not know how to sing. After naming those of Luther's hymns which are really authentic, and passing in review the Protestant Church composers up to the end of the seventeenth century, Mr. Ritter

devoted the second part of his lecture principally to a sketch, as full as his limits would allow, of the life and works of John Sebastian Bach and Handel, as composers of sacred Protestant music. In speaking of Bach, Mr. Ritter gave an especially fine analysis of the St. Matthew's Passion Oratorio, and drew an able parallel between Bach and Palestrina, and their relations to the church music of their several creeds. Of Handel's efforts in oratorio we had also a full account; those gigantic works, written after he had passed his fifty-third year. Reference was made to the oratorios of Italianized German composers, such as Hasse, Graun, Telemann, and those, now forgotten, of the English Arne, Arnold and others, as also to Pagolus' beautiful works in this form, and to Mendelssohn's charming "St. Paul" and "Elijah." Nor was Schumann's great secular oratorio forgotten. In summing up the merits, aim and influence of the oratorio form and its composer's claims, Mr. Ritter said, finely and truly, that "only through a return to a deep, earnest and faithful study of the immortal works of Handel can a new art foundation be gained. Were not Haydn and Mendelssohn inspired by Handel? Yet, though they created noble works, they did not reach, far less surpass, their glorious model. Then let us go back to that inexhaustible mine of inspiration—not in the spirit of mere imitators and superficial transcribers, but in that of the best minds of our own times—to strengthen, intensify and enlarge our views through the ennobling influence of perfect models. No age has yet produced fine works independent of those that preceded it; and no age will fulfil an artistic mission in its full significance by wilfully ignoring or depreciating the great and the beautiful which ages before it have already accomplished."—*Weekly Review.*

Musical Correspondence.

CHICAGO, Dec. 24.—Of musical occurrences here since my last letter, the following mention must suffice. Nov. 27, 29 and 30, came THEODORE THOMAS with his superbly trained orchestra. These concerts were given in Farwell Hall, and were entirely superior to anything in the orchestral line we have ever dreamed of here. Whatever they did was with such exquisite finish as to leave us but one adjective with which to describe the *ensemble*: it was certainly nearer *perfect* than most things are to which that significant adjective is applied. We had only to lament that the performances partook so largely of the nature of virtuoso doings as to forbid our being treated to an entire Symphony. The pecuniary result was not what it ought to have been, owing, principally, to the injudicious and inefficient management of the advance agent of the company. The first evening there was a mere handful of audience, scarcely five hundred; the second night some eight hundred or so; and the third, nearly two thousand.

The CARLOTTA PATTI troupe came Dec. 8, and gave five concerts. It is scarcely necessary that I should write anything to you about these concerts. As it regards money and fashion they were complete and immense successes. All Chicago turned out to hear, and I verily believe not a few thought the Patti before them was the Marquise de Caux herself. Hermanns, as usual, brought down the house in applause. Mr. Ritter played the piano in an elegant style, and with great modesty of deportment. He played several Gavottes by Bach, Mendelssohn's E-minor Rondo Capriccioso, and at the last concert, Mendelssohn's G-minor Concerto. Of this latter, which was characterized by the musicians present as a most beautiful performance, the papers made no mention. This strange oversight arose from the fact that the programmes were not published in advance, and the newspaper men, having already heard the same programme several times repeated, on this evening went virtuously home to bed, and wrote their next morning's *critiques* on general principles.

The PAREPA-ROSA ENGLISH OPERA TROUPE came back to us Dec. 13 with "Norma," followed by "Faust," "Sonnambula," and "Der Freyschütz." "Norma" was done well in only two respects: Mme. Parepa Rosa, and Mrs. Zelda Seguin. These two alone saved the performance from being an utter

fiasco. It appeared that, the orchestral parts not having arrived, the instruments were played partly from the dictates of the "inner consciousness" of the individual players. The result was not pleasing. Mme. Parepa sang grandly—as no one else has ever sung "Norma" here; and in Mrs. Seguin she had a worthy supporter. Mr. Nordblom was by no means a worthy Pollio. The papers had a great deal to say about the impropriety of giving "Norma" in English, but for my part I see no reason why a murder in English is more culpable than one in Italian. Of the performance of "Der Freyschütz" a like qualified admiration must be expressed. The first time, every thing went a little slowly, as the singers were not familiar with the stage business, nor even with the dialogue; but the second performance was much better. In the cast we had Mme. Parepa as Agatha, Miss Hersee as Ann, Castle as Max, and Campbell as Caspar. I think it is not too much to say that all of these parts were well sustained. Mme. Parepa was not at her best, owing to a bad cold; but her singing of the "Prayer" was something long to be remembered. The Wolf's Glen scene was elaborately gotten up, and throughout the scenic effects were better than our opera managers usually take pains to give us. The orchestra, too, although not so good as we would like, contains some excellent players, especially a first violin and double bass, and is very ably directed by Carl Rosa.

I ought also to mention the rendering of *Faust*. Miss Hersee's Margharita, Mr. Castle's Faust, and Mr. Lawrence's Valentine were all worthy of high praise. Mr. Lawrence sang the song, "Loving smile of sister kind," written for the part by Gounod, after *Faust* was brought out in English in London. This song adds much to the musical attractiveness of the opera, and was admirably done. The death of Valentine was also an excellent piece of acting.

I differ in toto from those critics who would confine this troupe to "Maritana," "Bohemian Girl," and the like, under the pretense that the music of "Faust," "Norma," and "Der Freyschütz," is of too high a character for them, and the operas themselves improper for English. This, in my opinion, is mere twaddle. That there are imperfections in their renderings I readily admit, but the steady improvement in the successive performances is marked and gratifying. The troupe contains six artists who are of remarkable merit, and all of them are deservedly popular here. They are: Mme. Parepa, Miss Hersee, Mrs. Seguin, Messrs. Castle, Campbell and Lawrence.

The most successful performances here were "Martha" and "The Marriage of Figaro."

By way of general gossip I have only space to note that Lyon & Healy were just moving into a new store that will be one of the most elegant in the country. Of this I will write fully in my next. Mr. Dudley Buck has been very ill, but is now well. The Quintette Club are busy throughout the West, and on the whole are doing well. The Parepa troupe have had great business in some of the smaller towns as well as here. Times are hard; but Christmas is merry.

DER FREYSCHÜTZ.

NEW YORK, Dec. 20. On Saturday evening the Brooklyn Society gave its second concert, at the Academy of Music. The solo artists were Miss Anna Mehlig (piano), Miss Nettie Sterling (contralto), and Mr. Levy (cornet à piston). The following selections were performed:

4th Symphony, D minor, op. 120.....Schumann.
2 movements from "Fantastic Symphony".....Berlioz.
Fackeltanz, C minor.....Meyerbeer.

The Symphony was very excellently played, barring some few deficiencies in the final movement. Mr. Bergner did ample justice to himself and to his reputation in the violoncello solo with which the Romance opens, and the same may be said of Mr. Noll in the exquisite violin passage (in the same move-

ment) which drops, in triplets, so daintily down to the low notes of the instruments. I think the best performance was that of the Scherzo, the tempo of which was taken—as it seemed to me—much more moderately than is usual with Mr. Bergmann.

Doubtless such composers as Hector Berlioz have and have had their uses, although it would perplex one greatly to say what those uses are. The portions of his "Fantastic Symphony" given on Saturday evening, are hardly calculated to fill the soul with delight, and I am always suspicious of the merit of any musical composition which needs a printed analysis to explain its meaning. Music of intrinsic worth and meaning should explain itself.

Miss Mehlig, a German pianiste who has recently arrived in this country, achieved an immense success in her very artistic rendering of a quaint, old-fashioned Concerto by Hummel. Her execution is very fine, her touch delicate yet firm, and she plays with a passion and abandon only too rare among artists here. She was enthusiastically encored—the orchestra taking a most active part in the general manifestation of delight,—and then played an extremely difficult and very effective arrangement of Paganini's "Clochette." Her technique is superb and she never, under any circumstances, forces the tone of the instrument. She made use of a powerful and full-toned Steinway grand, whose resonant tones filled every corner of the auditorium.

Miss Nettie Sterling—who has been studying for two years in Europe, and whose friends are so eulogistic of her powers—did not create a very marked sensation. Her voice is quite a full and rich one, but her manner and style are cold. Her execution of Rossini's "Di tanti palpiti" was devoid of anything like fire and vigor, and her singing, as a whole, impressed me as being *amateurish*. We fear that injudicious friends have flattered her (as other American singers have been flattered) into the belief that she is a great artist; that she certainly is not. Two years ago she sang at several concerts in Steinway Hall, when her efforts gave me the impression that she was a vocalist of much talent and promise. My expectations have not been realized, for she is not true to pitch, her execution is quite labored, and her manner cold and unsympathetic. I regret to say this plainly, but a critic must be just and conscientious. Besides the Rossini Cavatina she sang two of Schumann's lovely songs, which were singularly inappropriate to the occasion.

Mr. Levy's solos, also, were a little out of place at a Philharmonic concert, for although his first one—one of De Beriot's "Airs"—belongs to a very good class of music, yet his encore, his own "Maud Waltz," is too trivial for any musical entertainment of any dignity. Of course the managers of the Society must endeavor to please their subscribers, and it is natural that they should even strain a point to do so; but I respectfully suggest that this sort of thing is going a little too far. It is better to stop somewhere; and who would wish to arrive at the period when one of the chief attractions of a Philharmonic programme should be "Shoo fly, don't bodder me," arranged for solo, chorus and grand orchestra, with "bones" and burnt cork accompaniments? It behooves the directors of this Society to consider this matter carefully.

The 3d concert will be given on Saturday evening, Jan. 22nd, 1870, with the assistance of Mr. Bergner (violinello) and of Mr. Jarvis (piano), of Philadelphia, who will play Chopin's F-minor Concerto. The orchestral programme will include Mendelssohn's "Scotch" Symphony, and the *Tannhäuser* Overture.

NOTE TO THE ABOVE. Our Correspondent's plainly candid impression of Miss Sterling's singing must pass for what it is worth. But we are bound to say that we have heard, from competent sources, much more favorable testimony. And we have so often heard the charge of "coldness" brought by really musical, appreciative people against artists

who we know sing with feeling, that we have learned to accept that criticism always with a considerable grain of caution. We hear that we shall have ere long an opportunity to judge here for ourselves of the singer in question. Meanwhile, on the principle of *audi alteram partem*, we append a portion of an extract which a friend has sent to us.—Ed.

"Miss Sterling went forth to be an earnest student, and it need hardly be said, of one who could be so severe a self-critic, that she brought high intelligence to her studies.

"We have been privileged to hear her since her return, and we can conscientiously say, that her labor has been well bestowed, for the results have exceeded our expectations. Her voice was always fine; its body full, its resources of power very great, and she used it with considerable skill. But it was not equal; it had an abundance of rough energy which needed refining, toning down, and, in some parts, building up. Her impulse and enthusiasm were great, but these, too, needed that control which could only be accomplished by that self-possession which perfect knowledge gives.

"Miss Sterling has achieved these ends. Her noble voice has attained its full power. It has been thoroughly equalized, and now presents that combination of ample power, cultivated refinement, and passion controlled by intelligence. She has now, in addition to one of the finest voices ever heard, an artistic style and finish which fits her as well for the operatic stage as the concert-room, and we predict for her a brilliant success in both departments. We believe the stage to be her true mission, and if she follows out the true instincts of her nature, America will have had the honor of giving to the world two of the finest contraltos, Miss Adelaide Phillips and Miss Nettie Sterling, of the present century."

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, JAN. 1, 1870.

The Christmas Oratorios.

The Music Hall was completely filled on Saturday evening with the devoutly attentive audience, as usual, to the Christmas Oratorio *par excellence*, Handel's "Messiah." The chorus seats were very full—perhaps 600 singers—and their new arrangement on the stage, each of the four masses rising tier on tier from orchestra to gallery, seemed to be an improvement; though we incline to think the arrangement never will be satisfactory until the stage is lowered several feet, so that the choral amphitheatre may spring from a point nearer the floor of the auditorium. Good balance of parts, rich, clear ringing quality of collective tone, and for the most part a fair degree of enthusiasm were noticeable in the chorus singing, which was on the whole better than we have had for a good while. More light and shade than usual showed careful rehearsal, creditable to Conductor ZERRAHN and to the Handel and Haydn Society. Still, sometimes there was more or less lack of promptness and decision in the coming in of parts, especially the basses. The tenors, however, rang out with uncommon purity and were instant to the mark. We were glad to have the expressive chorus: "And with His stripes" restored; though not one of the happiest renderings of the evening, it prepared the way more fitly for the boldly contrasted "All we like sheep have gone astray."

The soloists were certainly the best available. Anything more satisfactory, in sound or feeling, than the delivery of "O thou that tellest," "He shall feed his flock," and, above all, "He was despised," by Miss ADELAIDE PHILLIPS, were more than reasonable to hope for or desire. She never sang better, or more to the hearts of all. It was natural enough that the great mass of the audience could not be content with one hearing of "He shall feed;" but when we consider that the same melody, only on a higher key, is immediately repeated by the Soprano in "Come unto Him," and when that also, sung so finely by Miss HOUSTON, had to be repeated in its turn, it seems a

reasonable question whether in such cases a Conductor ought not in the interests of art to override the improvident momentary wishes of an audience, rather than allow the same piece to be sung four times over, and that too at the risk of dulling the appetite for the last part of a three hours' performance. The latter portion of a long Oratorio demands all the protection which abstinence from encores in the first part can afford. Miss HUSTON's telling voice, always brilliant, has gained in fullness and in evenness, and her interpretation of the great soprano music was more artistically whole and rounded out, more evenly sustained, more impressive than ever. She has learned something in her short stay abroad. She was warmly welcomed back to a sphere which it was thought she had abandoned; and certainly she threw all her soul into her song, which was generally good, and now and then in certain moments almost great, for she is a singer who has inspirations.

The greatest new gain to the Oratorio was the grand Bass of Mr. M. W. WHITNEY, who rendered all those airs in a much more artistic and effective style than he was capable of before he went abroad. Mr. W. J. WINCH showed very considerable improvement in the management of his quite pleasing tenor voice, and in a more expressive rendering of the music, particularly in the opening, "Comfort ye," &c. But he has hardly strength to cope with "Thou shalt break them," or fineness and depth of pathos for "Thy rebuke." There is still a certain crudeness, hardness, and sense of effort in what he does; while on the other hand he is free from affectation, sentimentality, or coarseness, and seems to have right intentions, which with study and experience may achieve much.

The Orchestra was hardly as strong as we could wish, and in some of the wind instrument passages (as "He was despised") badly out of tune,—doubtless owing to the difficulty of adapting the old instruments to the Organ (French) pitch. We are glad to learn that a beginning has been made in the procuring of new instruments. Mr. J. C. D. PARKER presided ably at the Great Organ.

COSTA'S "NAAMAN." The rain on Sunday evening thinned the chorus ranks and thinned the audience, though both were out in good force. It was a better performance on the whole, more bright, more spirited and telling than the work received last year; yet of the composition as a whole we saw no cause to change our first impression. Much of it is pleasing, much musician-like in treatment; several of the choruses fine; the orchestration almost always interesting. But many of the Airs, the Quartets, &c., are of a common-place, sweetish operatic character; the air of the Child, particularly, which Miss PHILLIPS sang so beautifully, and which was encored, sounding for all the world like one of the modern English ballads. Miss Phillips, of course, made the most of her three parts: the wife of Naaman, the Widow, and the Child.

One of the merits of the work, as we said last Spring, lies in the marked characterization of the parts; and the most interesting of these, that of Adah, so beautifully sung the first time by Miss Whitten, did not suffer in the hands of Miss HUSTON. Miss GATES was not so happy with the part of the Shunamite Woman as she was before; her voice was much afflicted with the tremolo (perhaps due to a cold), and there was too much of wild, spasmodic outburst in the place of real energy and climax. Mr. RUDOLPHSEN, who has in a great measure recovered the best

power of his voice, gave a truly dramatic and impressive rendering of the part of Elisha. Mr. WINCH, though far from equal to the impassioned moods of Naaman, did himself credit on the whole, and the impression made by the other tenor, Mr. PRESCOTT, who appeared in solo for the first time, in the smaller part of Gehazi, was one that may encourage him to perseverance.

Tomorrow evening the Society are to begin the study of the *St. Matthew Passion*-music of Sebastian Bach.

Concerts.

FOURTH SYMPHONY CONCERT. (Music Hall, Thursday afternoon, Dec. 16). The mightiest of all musical names to conjure by in Boston is BEETHOVEN. And so the Beethoven programme,—mere chance suggestion from the fact that the 99th anniversary of the great composer's birthday would come the next day after the concert—seems to have raised the highest expectation, and, on the whole, to have realized the greatest amount of pure enjoyment and enthusiasm of any of the Symphony Concerts from the first. The largest audience yet seen filled the Music Hall,—an audience remarkable for culture, taste, and weight of character,—but this time more remarkable for the deep, unflinching attention and enthusiasm with which it listened for two hours to music wholly from one master's works. What other composer could stand such a test! Yet it was easy to make up a programme out of his works exclusively, and be sure that it would hold and charm all hearers to the end. And that, too, setting aside, by reason of their familiarity, all of the three or four greatest of the nine Symphonies in the general estimation, though none perhaps could be more lovely than the one presented:

Overture to "The Men of Prometheus,"..... Beethoven.
Fourth Symphony, in B flat.....
Overture, in C, Op. 116, composed for the "Name Day" of an Emperor..... Beethoven.
[Repeated by request.]
Piano Forte Concerto, No. 5, in E flat, op. 73.... "
Ernst Perabo.
Overture to "Egmont"..... "

Here was a good enough representative selection from the several periods and forms of his orchestral works. It worked to a charm, at all events; all seemed too happily, intensely occupied with what there was before them to covet anything outside. The Overture to the "Prometheus" Ballet, fresh, spontaneous, Mozartish, told of his young life and joy in vigorous, felicitous production. The warm fourth Symphony—though after the great *Eroica*—betrays the lover's secret,—spiritual, deep, yet passionate, taking all Nature into its confidence, hiding itself in such ideal utterance,—the "Adelaide" and the "Moonlight Sonata" side of his existence. The sketchy Overture in C, full of auroral premonitions of his sublimest thoughts, (read in one of our recent numbers how he first meant its themes for illustration of Schiller's Hymn to "Joy," and how, after that had grown into a so much vaster work, he threw these themes together into an Overture for his Emperor's name day), is a good instance wherein to see what genius, what greatness is still hinted, if not splendidly elaborated, in such a master's slightest efforts. Then, for one of the heroic, the triumphant, the imperial creations of a truer Emperor than any who reigned over Austria, Beethoven himself, the "Emperor Concerto," as it is often called in England. And, finally, an Overture which is one of his greatest, one of the most perfect, most impressive, and most characteristic in its intense, concise, complete expression, that to "Egmont." Of course, another selection might have been as good; but here was enough for a feast, and so good that none thought of better. The Ninth Symphony of course ought to be reserved for the Centennial next year.

Well, all these works were pretty well known here before—except the Op. 115, which certainly did gain

in general interest on the second hearing. What more need be said then, farther than that they were all uncommonly well rendered by the Orchestra,—particularly the Concerto and the "Egmont"—and that the vast audience seemed inspired with the good genius of absorbed and, so to say, *clairvoyant* attention, in sympathetic, charmed rapport with each successive phase and movement of the music? There was a grand impressiveness, an irresistible, fine magnetism, in the very fact of such attention and deep interest in so many. We must not forget to say that Mr. PERABO played his part in the Concerto superbly, winning enthusiastic tributes, though by rare chance the Chickering piano was not of their very best,—at least for that use. The Orchestra, we thought, achieved their best success thus far in their part of that glorious Concerto; even the wind instruments were nearly faultless. All seem to look upon this as the great concert of the season, hardly to be surpassed; yet nothing was intended beyond a passing allusion to the great master's birth day, in the simple form of a selection from his works. There was no decoration, save the beautiful laurel wreath upon the head of the bronze Beethoven, placed there by the fittest hands, those of our generous townsman to whom we owe the presence and possession here of Crawford's noble statue, and who now, after twelve years' residence abroad, has returned to be among us once more the same earnest and efficient friend and furtherer of Music, and of all æsthetic culture, that he was in younger days.

The next concert will come after the longer interval of three weeks, namely, on the 20th of January. It will be marked by the new feature of the first performance in this country of the *Magnificat* by Durante, with full orchestral score by Franz, and sung by a select choir, mostly amateurs, under the direction of Mr. KREISSMANN. They will also sing Mozart's admirable *Ave verum* and Schumann's "Gypsy Life." Mr. J. C. D. PARKER will play Mendelssohn's D-minor Concerto; and the strictly orchestral numbers will be the *Suite* in D, by Bach (the same that Tieo. Thomas gave us); Schumann's first Symphony, in B flat; and the Overture to *Euryanthe*.

The LISTEMANN QUARTET Matinées are finished. We must reserve what we have to say of the last two till our next number.

NEXT. The Farewell Concert of Miss ALIDE TOPP, this evening, at the Music Hall, must not be forgotten. It offers rare attractions. The Septet by Hummel, with PERABO at the piano, and with all the instruments, is alone enough for the making of a concert. The brilliant and enthusiastic young pianiste herself will play Chopin's B-flat minor Scherzo; a Hungarian Rhapsody by Liszt; a Cachoucha by Raff, and part of Schubert's "Soirées de Vienne," as arranged by Liszt. She will also play Miss ADALIDE PHILLIPS's accompaniment in her last song, an Arietta by Blumenthal; besides which, our noble Contralto will sing a Prayer by Donizetti. Mr. WHITNEY, the Basso, contributes a Concert Aria by Mozart and an English song by Randegger; Mr. B. LISTEMANN, a couple of Violin solos of the Paganini school.

Mr. PERABO gives the first Matinée of his second series on Friday, 7th inst., when he will play a Prelude and Fugue by Mendelssohn (in E minor, op. 35); Liszt's transcription of Beethoven's Cycle of Six Songs: "An die ferne Geliebte," a couple of charming and original Studies by Sterndale Bennett; and the Sonata in D, op. 53, by Schubert.

The PAREPA-ROSA English Opera will be here early in the month, when we may hope to hear "Figaro's Marriage," "Oberon" and other good things well done.

Oratorio.

New York, Dec. 4, 1869.

To the Editor of the World:

SIR:—Allow me to make a few remarks in reference to your kind and detailed report of the last performance of "Judas Maccabæus" by the Harmonic Society. While you give me credit for the scientific knowledge which a conductor must possess in order to carry out a correct performance of Handel's oratorios, you seem to think me wanting in the enthusiasm necessary to inspire a chorus and orchestra. This remark was in a certain sense novel to me: as, so far in my public career, friends have been rather inclined to tax me with an unnecessary excess of enthusiasm. But if you could be aware of half the obstacles that lie in the path of an oratorio conductor in this city, and of the especial obstacles that have been placed in my path, you would allow that only a very great amount of natural enthusiasm and veneration for this noble branch of art could sustain a conductor in this thankless vocation.

Though we have a very large number of church singers in New York, these are apparently lacking in that unselfish love of art which should prompt them to take part in great choral performances, in which only the masses, and not the individuals, are brought into prominence. The small proportion of singers who make oratorio singing a study is divided into half a dozen little societies, and among these, from various causes, continual discords are arising, and they do not co-operate on public occasions as they should. As far as my experience goes, the members of these societies are not so fully convinced of the necessity of a punctual attendance at rehearsal as to neglect social or business engagements in order to be present on regular practice evenings. The conductor may be overflowing with knowledge, enthusiasm and devotion, yet how is it possible for him, without the aid of magic, to infuse his own soul into the brains and voices of singers who are lacking in the thorough practice and knowledge absolutely indispensable to a correct performance of such profound works as those of Handel? A willing few always attend; but even they become discouraged at performance by the mistake of those, unfortunately in the majority, who only appear at the eleventh hour.

Another misfortune attends the getting up of oratorio performances. You are aware how expensive an undertaking it is; more than one rehearsal with the orchestra is seldom had, because our societies are poor, and not sustained by our rich amateurs as they should be. The Harmonic Society's general rehearsal, with chorus and orchestra, has to take place (from forced economical reasons) in the day-time, when those members who are business men cannot attend. Let my chorus be ever so well drilled, how is a perfect performance to take place under such conditions? Our Philharmonic Society—a society of professional and not amateur musicians, like our oratorio chorus singers—has, besides three public rehearsals, as many private ones by its entire force as its conductor thinks requisite; and this, too, of works which have been, most of them, played in the society for the last twenty years. Would the Philharmonic performances be as fine as they are did they take place with a single incomplete rehearsal.

I have often, in moments of heartfelt discouragement, agreed with you that, under such difficulties, oratorio performances should rather be given up; but trust in the final triumph of a good cause has again renewed my—shall I say enthusiasm and devotion to a noble branch of art?—in spite of the injustice with which, in too many cases, my efforts have been treated, and the hard trials to which my patience has been subjected.

Thanking you for your criticism, apparently dictated by a kind and appreciative spirit, I remain, yours truly,
F. L. RITTER.

London.

THE ORATORIO CONCERTS.—Mr. Barnby opened his season on Wednesday night with a capital performance of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, followed by the *Dettingen Te Deum*, both works being given with Mendelssohn's additional accompaniments. The band, comprising the leading members of the Italian Opera orchestras, brought out to perfection the many beauties with which the score of old Handel has been enriched; and, although the ultra conservative musician may still prefer to hear the Pastoral in its original form, such a performance as that of Wednesday night must go far to shake his allegiance to the almost primitive orchestra which existed in Handel's time. The choruses were uniformly well sung by Mr. Barnby's choir of three hundred voices, whose clear intonation and attention to the beat give good promise for the more important concerts which are to follow; when, among other works, we are promised Bach's *Passions Musik*, Beethoven's *Mass in*

D, and his *Ninth Symphony*. The solos in the Cantata were taken by Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, whose bright voice so well suits Handel's songs, Mr. Vernon Rigby, Mr. Montem Smith, and Herr Stepan. The latter gentleman obtained an "ovation" for his singing of the famous "O ruddier than the cherry," in which he displayed unlimited power, finishing on the high G; but, at the same time, we can hardly regard him as a satisfactory exponent of Handel's music. In the *Te Deum*, the brief solo parts were allotted to Miss Marion Severn, a young lady whose excellent contralto voice is speedily bringing her to the front among our concert singers, Mr. Smith, and Herr Stepan. The *Messiah*, on the 21st, will form the Christmas performance.

SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.—The first Oratorio of the season was "Israel in Egypt," which was given Dec. 3, under the direction of Sir Michael Costa. The *Times* says:

Little need be stated about the performance, beyond the fact that in some respects it was one of the very finest ever heard at Exeter Hall. Into details it would be superfluous to enter. Enough that from "The children of Israel sighed by reason of their bondage" to "Israel saw that great work that the Lord did upon the Egyptians," in the first part, and from the magnificent "Song of Moses," which begins, to "The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea," a repetition of the most striking part of the other, which ends the second part, the choruses were delivered with extraordinary vigor and—rare exceptions admitted—precision. "He gave them hailstones" (the absurdly attempted restriction against all audible expressions of satisfaction notwithstanding) was unanimously called for again, and repeated as a matter of course; and this with equal reason might have been the case with "He spake the word" and "Thy right hand, O Lord." More agreeable still to relate, however, is the fact that among the choruses efficiently executed were the two most elaborate and difficult of all—"With the blast of Thy nostrils," and "The people shall hear." The solo-singers were Misses Edith Wynne and Vinta, Madame Sainton-Dolby, Messrs. Lewis Thomas, Winn, and Vernon Rigby. Mr. Rigby gave the *bravura* air, "The enemy said, I will pursue," with remarkable power and vigor of declamation, and, being loudly encored, repeated it. Mr. Rigby is evidently a favorite, not only with the Sacred Harmonic audience, but with the Sacred Harmonic chorus; and such warm encouragement as he invariably receives should (and no doubt will) induce him to study assiduously. He has in his favor both voice and physical stamina. He must now aspire to artistic refinement, which, we believe, if he be not spoiled by applause, he will succeed in attaining. Nothing could have been more marked than his reception on Friday night. We need hardly say that the ever-popular duet for basses, "The Lord is a man of war," was also encored; nor that it was declaimed with fitting energy by those well-known artists, Messrs. Lewis Thomas and Winn. Among the most finished examples of Handelian singing in the course of the night were the lovely air, "Thou didst blow with Thy wind" (with its ingenious "ground bass" accompaniment), and "Thou shalt bring them in"—the first given by Miss Edith Wynne, the last by Madame Sainton-Dolby. The audience was as impressionable as it was large; and *Israel in Egypt* was, perhaps, never more thoroughly appreciated. On appearing in the orchestra, Sir Michael Costa was greeted with enthusiasm, and by his admirable conducting throughout showed, not for the first time, how worthy he is of the distinguished position he has so long occupied. It should be stated that the additional accompaniments used upon this, as upon previous occasions, were from Sir Michael's own facile and ingenious pen.

The next oratorio (on Friday) is to be Handel's *Deborah*—a revival which would alone cause the season 1869-70 to be remembered.

PRAGUE.—The concert season was opened by Herr Becker, with his celebrated Florentine Quartet, the programme comprising Mozart's fifth Quartet in A major; a new Quartet in F major, by Joh. Herbeck; and Beethoven's Op. 74 "The Ladies' Band," in which all the performers are of the gentler sex, under the direction of Mlle. Josephine Weinlich, attracted a large audience, anxious to see how the violin, violoncello, and that light, airy instrument, the double bass, would obey female fingers, as well as what sounds female lips could evoke from the trombone and the ophicleide. The result was in favor of the fair instrumentalists, though they may, perhaps, find that, when the novelty of their exhibition—for it really must be regarded rather as an exhibition than a performance—is worn off a bit, the attractions will not be so great.

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